

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----025284 311720Z /41

O R 311600Z JUL 78 ZFF-4  
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0093  
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 2156

EXDIS

BAMAKO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE  
CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, MR  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S LOW KEY REPETITION OF MAURITANIA'S  
APPEAL FOR USG POLITICAL SUPPORT

REF: (A) NOUAKCHOTT 1906 (B) NOUAKCHOTT 1923 (C) NOUAKCHOTT 2013  
(D) STATE 177978

1. SUMMARY: IN AN HOUR LONG MEETING SATURDAY JULY 29, FOREIGN  
MINISTER PRESENTED LOW KEY SOMEWHAT TONED DOWN VERSION OF  
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PREVIOUS GIRM APPEALS FOR USG POLITICAL SUPPORT. HE DESCRIBED  
IN SOME DETAIL HIS ENCOUNTER WITH BOUMEDIENE. HE SEEMED QUITE  
OPEN IN HIS RECOUNTING OF THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY AND SHARING  
WITH ME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS UNDER GIRM EXAMINATION. HE  
ASKED THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE CONSIDER VISITING NOUAK-  
CHOTT. END SUMMARY.

2. I CALLED UPON FOREIGN MINISTER CHEIKHNA OULD MOHAMED LAGHDAF AT HIS INITIATIVE, LATE SATURDAY MORNING JULY 29.. I EXPECTED IT TO BE A BRIEF COURTESY VISIT. IT TURNED OUT TO BE AN HOUR-LONG DISCUSSION OF THE SAHARA CONFLICT AND SOFT-PEDALED REITERATION OF HIEF OF STATE OULD SALECK'S APPEAL FOR HELP IN GETTING OUT OF THE SAHARA CONFLICT WITHOUT ANTAGONIZING THE MOROCCANS.

3. HE BEGAN WITH A WELL-ORGANIZED, PRESUMABLY WELL-REHERSED, OVER-VIEW OF MAURITANIA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE MADE NO MENTION OF FORMER PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH. HE THEN REPEATED THE NOW FAMILIAR TWIN OBJECTIVES OF GIRM FOREIGN POLICY, VIZ., (A) END THE WAR AND (B) MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES WITH MOROCCO. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ALL FRIENDS OF MAURITANIA TO HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF GIRM POLICY BUT THAT IT WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE USG TO KNOW HOW DEEPLY AND SINCERELY THE GIRM WAS COMMITTED TO THESE OBJECTIVES. HE STATED QUOTE WE WANT TO MAINTAIN GOOD NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ALL OUR FIRENDS BUT WE WANT TO STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONS WITH OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND WITH THE U.S. END QUOTE. HE THEN REITERATED THE PITCH ALREADY MADE BY PRESIDENT OULD SALECK (NOUAKCHOTT 1923) AND ISMAEL OULD AMAR (NOUAKCHOTT 1906) THAT WE USE OUR INFLUENCE TO SOFTEN MOROCCO AND TO EXPLAIN TO ALGERIA HOW MACH IMORTANCE MAURITANIA ATTACHED TO ENDING THE WAR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS  
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WAS NOT A REQUEST TO MEDIATE, NOR DID HE ASK THAT WE FLOAT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. HE MERELY ASKED THAT WE DO WHAT WE CAN TO AMKE MOROCCO MORE RECEPTIVE TO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WHEN THEY ARE ADVANCED.

4. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO REPEAT THE UBSTANCE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN STATE 177978. HIS RESPONSE WAS THAT HE UNDERSTOOD AND RESPECTED OUR POSITION BUT REITERATED THAT THE GIRM WAS NOT ASKING US TO GO BEYOND QUOTE SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF OTHER FRIENDS TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT END QUOTE. HE ADDED THAT WE ALL KNOW THE STRONG LINKS THAT BIND MOROCCO TO SAUDI ARABIA; WE ALSO KNOW THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS PUBLICLY OFFERED ITS GOOD OFFICES (SIC). HE SAID THAT THE SAUDIS WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE THE LEAD IN WORKING OUT SOLUTION FOR ENDING THE WAR THAT WAS MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS IF IT HAD FRENCH AND USG SUPPORT IN THESE EFFORTS. WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT, I PROMISED TO CONVEY HIS THOUGHTS TO WASHINGTON.

5. I THEN ASKED HIM TO ELABORATE ON THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY AND SPECIFICA LY IF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WERE IN PROGRESS. HE SAID THAT DEPENDED ON ONE'S DEFINITION OF NEGOTIATIONS;

THAT THERE HAVE BEEN DIRECT TALKS WITH MOROCCO, ALGERIA AND THE POLISARIO, BUT THAT NO ONE REPRESENTING THE GIRM WAS CURRENTLY DISCUSSING SPECIFIC FORMULAE FOR ENDING THE CONFLICT. MOREOVER NO SPECIFIC FORMULAE HAVE BEEN PROPOSED TO THE MOROCCANS.

6. TURNING TO THE KHARTOUM OAU SUMMIT, AT MY PROMPTING, HE SAID HE HAD HAD A CORDIAL EXCHANGE WITH BOUMEDIENE. THE LATTER TOLD HIM (OFF THE RECORD, HE SAID) THAT HE RECENTLY RECEIVED A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER WHICH, INTER ALIA, ENCOURAGED HIM TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE SAHARA CONFLICT. LAGHDAF SAID THAT BOUMEDIENE ASSURED HIM THAT CONTRARY TO THE OPINION HELD BY SOME, ALGERIA HAS NO INTEREST WHATSOEVER IN  
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A) THE MINERAL DEPOSITS IN THE WESTERN SAHARA  
B) SO MUCH AS A SQUARE CENTIMETER OF WESTERN SAHARAN LAND, OR  
C) ACCESS TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

HE QUOTED BOUMEDIENE AS SAYING THAT ALGERIA'S ONLY INTEREST IN THIS ENTIRE AFFAIR IS SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE SAHARAUI PEOPLE.

7. IN THE COURSE OF THE ENSUING CONVERSATION, LAGHDAF TOLD ME RATHER CURIOUSLY THAT ALTHOUGH THE GIRM IS STILL HOLDING TO THE OULD DADDAH POSITION THAT THE FEBRUARY 1976 DECISION OF THE SAHARAN TERRITORIAL JEMAA SATISFIED THE SELF DETERMINATION QUESTION, HE WOULD SHARE WITH ME TWO CLOSELY HELD POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF THE CONFLICT BEING CONSIDERED BY THE GIRM:  
A) THE FIRST IS THE UN MANDATE IDEA THAT OULD AMAR FLOATED A FEW DAYS AFTER THE COUP, BY WHICH MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO WOULD SUSPEND THEIR CLAIMS TO SOVEREIGNTY TO THE TERRITORIES IN THE

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----025457 311745Z /41

O R 311600Z JUL 78 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0094

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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BAMAKO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

WESTERN SAHARA BUT CONTINUE TO ADMINISTER THEM AS TRUST TERRITORIES. HE CITED SOUTH WEST AFRICA (SIC) AS AN EXAMPLE. IN DUE COURSE THE POPULACE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO OPT FOR COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OR COMPLETE INTEGRATION OR SOMETHING IN BETWEEN.

B) THE OTHER FORMULA CALLS FOR RETENTION OF CURRENT (POST MADRID ACCORDS) POLITICAL BOUNDARIES; BUT EH WESTERN SAHARA WOULD BE GIVEN SPECIAL ECONOMIC STATUS. SPECIFICALLY ALL THE PROFITS OF THE MINERAL OPERATIONS WOULD BE RETAINED WITHIN THE WESTERN SAHARA.

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8. WHEN I WONDERED ALOUD IF THERE WAS ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE JULY 27 PARIS TALKS BETWEEN PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND THE TWO MAURITANIAN ENVOYS (PARIS 22441), WHICH HAD BEEN FEATURED IN SATURDAY'S CHAAB (NOUAKCHOTT'S GOVERNMENT-RUN DAILY PAPER) AND FRENCH AMBASSADOR REMOVILLE'S ABRUPT DEPARTURE TO PARIS (NOUAKCHOTT 2119), LAGHDAF SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE GIRM HAD ASKED FRANCE FOR ESSENTIALLY THE SAME KIND OF POLITICAL SUPPORT THAT IT WAS ASKING OF US, THE PARIS TALKS FOCUSED ON MAURITANIA'S FINANCIAL CRISIS, HE OPINED THAT REMOVILLE MIGHT HAVE HURRIED HOME FOR PERSONAL REASONS.

9. AFTER EXPRESSING SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY THINGS TURNED

OUT AT THE KHARTOUM SUMMIT, HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GIRM WASN'T LOOKING FOR ANYTHING MEANINGFUL TO COME OUT OF THE OAU AD HOC COMMITTEE OF FIVE, CHARGED WITH DEALING WITH THE SAHARA CONFLICT. THE FONMINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL WHO UNTIL THEN HAD REMAINED SILENT, DESCRIBED THE COMMITTEE AS QUOTE UNE COUVERTURE END QUOTE, I.E. A COMPROMISE POLITICAL GESTURE THAT HAD TO BE MADE.

10. LAGHDAF THEN NOTED AS THOUGH IN PASSING THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE HAD VISITED RABAT AND DAKAR RECENTLY. I CONFIRMED THAT MR. MOOSE WAS TRAVELING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S MOTHER. WHEN HE THEN INQUIRED INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF A STOP IN NOUAKCHOTT BEFORE RETURNING TO THE U.S., I AGREED TO PUT THE QUESTION TO MR. MOOSE PROVIDED THAT I HAD THE GIRM'S ASSURANCES THAT HE WOULD BE GREETED WITH NO SURPRISES IF HE ACCEPTED; THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REQUESTS BEYOND THOSE ALREADY MADE TO ME AND CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON. HE AGREED, STATING THAT A VISIT BY A HIGH RANKING AMERICAN DIGNITARY WHO HAPPENED TO BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WOULD BE TREATED BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY BY GIRM LEADERS AS A MANIFESTATION  
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OF AN INFLUENTIAL FRIEND'S GOOD WILL TOWARDS THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

11. HE ENDED THE MEETING BY PROMISING TO INVITE ME FOR ANOTHER TALK SOON TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC MATTERS.

12. COMMENT: LAGHDAF, A COURTLY GENTLEMAN, WAS MORE IMPRESSIVE IN PERSON THAN I HAD EXPECTED AFTER HAVING SEEN HIS PHOTO IN THE CHAAB AND HAVING HEARD PERSISTENT TALK ABOUT HIS INFIRMITIES. ALTHOUGH PERHAPS MORE TYPICALLY MAURITANIAN, I.E. LESS WORDLY WISE THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, HE IS AT LEAST AS ARTICULATE AND SEEMS MORE WILLING TO LISTEN. RUMOR HAS IT THAT HE WILL SOON BE REPLACED, BUT AT THE MOMENT HE APPEARS TO BE ON TOP OF HIS JOB. THE SECRETARY GENERAL, A HOLD-OVER FROM THE OULD DADDAH REGIME, ATTENDED THE MEETING ESSENTIALLY AS NOTE TAKER AND DID NOT COACH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AS THE PRC AMBASSADOR TOLD ME WAS THE CASE DURING HIS COURTESY CALL ON THE FON MINISTER EARLIER IN THE WEEK. MY GUESS IS THAT IF THERE WAS ANY COACHING IT WAS DONE BY HIS NEPHEW, AHMEDOU OULD ABDULLAH, THE GIRM AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM AND THE EC. ALTHOUGH NO MENTION WAS MADE OF MY JULY 12 MEETING WITH CHIEF OF STATE, LAGHDAF WAS QUITE OBVIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO REPHRASE THE GIRM'S INITIAL REQUEST FOR USG POLITICAL SUPPORT IN TERMS THAT MIGHT BE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE OF SOME RESPONSE ON OUR PART. OUR RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MOOSE VISIT (NOUAKCHOTT 1781) AND A SUPPORTIVE USG ROLE IN PEACEMAKING NEGOTIATIONS (NOUAKCHOTT 2013 ET AL) REMAIN UNCHANGED. END COMMENT.

13. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT WE BE INFORMED, (A) AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE, WHETHER OR NOT A VISIT BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE  
IS IN THE CARDS AND (B) OF THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THE  
SUGGESTION THAT WE AND THE FRENCH OFFER TO SUPPORT SAUDI  
ARABIA'S EFFORTS TO SEEK MOROCCAN ACCEPTANCE OF MAURITANIAN  
PROPOSALS TO END THE WAR. ANY LIGHT THAT CAN BE SHED ON  
LETTER THAT BOUMEDIENE CLAIMS TO HAVE RECEIVED FROM PRESIDENT  
CARTER WOULD BE APPRECIATED.KRYZA  
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## Message Attributes

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